



PSSB Weekly Highlights

- NEPA approvals have been received for trunking equipment at the Fallon, Government Hill and Makoshika communications sites as well as for microwave equipment at the Hathaway site.
- MT Highway Patrol (MHP) technicians have been working in Glendive this past week replacing legacy repeaters to new narrowband capable ones. Site visits were conducted at the Makoshika and Belle Prairie sites. The ownership of Belle Prairie, which was built with state funds, was recently transferred to the MHP.

Ness Named PSSB Bureau Chief

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Quinn Ness, former Section Manager in the Dept. of Commerce, has accepted the position of Bureau Chief in the Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB), which is part of the State Information Services Technology Division of the Dept. of Administration.

Ness brings to the job a wealth of experience including federal and state grant management, finance administration, and information management system development and implementation. In addition, he has overseen financing of public infrastructure projects and directed cutting edge broadband communications efforts to recruit and retain businesses in Montana. He gained these skills over the past 20 years working for a regional securities firm in Colorado and in state government at the Dept. of Transportation, the Governor's Office, and the Dept. of Commerce.

Ness holds a BA in business finance from



Montana State University and is a native Montanan, having been born and raised in Bozeman.

"I look forward to working with the public safety community on planning and finance issues so that sound technological solutions can be implemented to ensure the safety and well being of all Montanans," said Ness.

PSSB manages statutory responsibilities for the operation of statewide 9-1-1 emergency telephone systems as well as for radio frequency management. The bureau assists local, state, tribal and federal public safety jurisdictions in identifying potential sources of funding and managing statewide strategic planning for public safety communications.

"I am excited about building stronger connections between the statewide radio system, the 9-1-1 Program and broadband initiatives," Ness said.

Federal Partners Briefed Regarding System Transition

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

The transition of the Montana Statewide Radio project from Interoperability Montana (IM) to the new Montana Statewide Radio Executive Committee is still raising questions among local, state, tribal and Federal partners. To help inform these important stakeholders, PSSB staff member Scott Bradford presented a briefing to the Federal Partnership for Interoperable Communications (FPIC) on Fri., Aug. 19 via a conference bridge. A number of FPIC members are important partners in Montana interoperable communications, including the Dept. of Interior, Dept. of Homeland Security, Dept. of Justice and the Forest Service, among others.

The presentation focused on the status of the project prior to the June 30 IM dissolution, and how efforts by a partnership of state agencies, local counties and the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (MSPOA) is protecting operational assets, maintaining crucial elements and continuing important projects in process.

During any transfer of operations, issues can be complicated and stressful. However, when combined with the fact that active projects to add additional site infrastructure, microwave connections and trunked/conventional VHF coverage are still in process (involving six Federal grants and significant state funding), those issues can be magnified. That's why it was important to present an update on the project, funding transitions, and interim governance models that will set the stage for a revised long-term governance and maintenance strategy.

HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

Ongoing efforts to continue reliable, secure operations are being led by Lewis and Clark County, which is serving as the trunking system administrator, and a consortium of state partners. For Federal partners, this fact ensures that current system users will continue to have reliable operations. It also means that as VHF trunking/conventional additions are implemented this fall, coverage will be expanded to more than one-third of the state, and new users will be added to the system. At the present time, more than 3900 users are registered on the Montana system.

The briefing also emphasized the very important partnership between local, state, tribal and Federal agencies in getting the Montana statewide communication system to the point where it is today as well as the importance of maintaining these partnerships to see this vital project to its conclusion. For additional information regarding the Montana statewide radio system transition, please contact PSSB at pssbinfo@mt.gov or the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) representative, Carl Hotvedt, at chotvedt@mt.gov.

Site Walk Adventures

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Julia Noland, Network Architect in PSSB, accompanied Dave Clouse, Project Manager for Yellowstone County, and Roger Smith, Microwave Network Administrator for Lewis and Clark County, on site walks last week. Seventeen site walks are scheduled to inspect Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) grant-funded microwave projects.

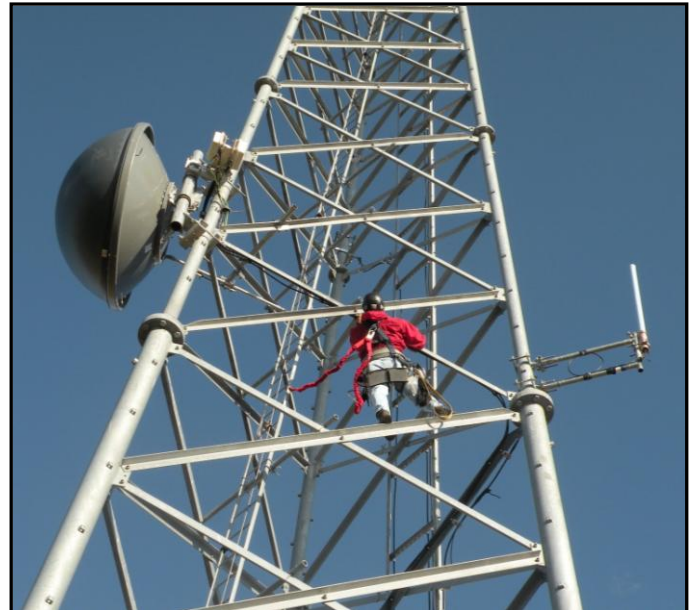
A checklist is used to ensure that all equipment, mechanical installations and configurations are correct and functioning as designed. For example, microwave signals need to be within specifications, cabling has to be installed correctly and generators are tested to ensure they perform correctly.

Testing was performed on a panel in the shelter that will monitor such items as door-closure contacts, and low- and high- temperature alarms. These alarm signals are passed on the microwave control channel to the monitoring system. Once the alerting and monitoring system is fully functional, these alerts will be sent to affected users.

"I really liked being able to see the functioning of the electrical door-closure contacts," said Julia. "They are completely wired into the system so access into shelters will be able to be monitored. The monitors won't know who visited the site, but they will know that the door was opened. This will be useful for vandalism or unauthorized access issues," she said.

Site walks are a critical final step before equipment is accepted and turned over to local jurisdictions. They

ensure that the contracted work meets the standards defined in the original Statement of Work. If corrective actions are needed, they are identified in a punch list that the contractor must address before the contract is closed and final payment is made.



A worker climbs the Coburn tower outside of Billings, Montana as part of a site walk of PSIC-funded communications sites.

2011 AFG Grant Now Accepting Applications!

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The FY 2011 Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) application period is now open until Sept. 9, 2011. The AFG program provides funding for essentials that firefighters and first responder's need to be safe and effective on the job.

As mentioned a few weeks ago, these essentials include such items as narrowband equipment, portable radios, mobile repeaters, mobile data terminals (MDTs), base stations, computer-aided dispatch, fixed-site repeaters, and wireless and broadband mobile data systems. If your department or agency has critical needs, AFG may be able to help. You may access the website at: <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants>.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Thurs., Sept. 15 - I-15/90 Corridor Consortium**
Butte • 10:00 am - noon
Butte Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.
- **Thurs., Sept. 15 - "Enabling Interoperability" Workshop**
Montreal, Canada
Hyatt Regency Montreal, 1255 Jeanne-Mance St.
<http://groups.winnforum.org/p/cm/ld/fid=171>